

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

By the foregoing amendment, claim 1 has been amended. No new matter has been added. No new matter has been added. Clear support can be found at least in page 3, lines 14-20 and page 3, line 28-page 4, line 22 of the present specification. Thus, claims 1-10 are currently pending in the present application and subject to examination.

In the Office Action dated April 26, 2007, the Examiner rejected claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,904,527 to Parlour et al. ("Parlour). It is noted that claim 1 has been amended. To the extent that the rejection remains applicable to the claims currently pending, the Applicants hereby traverse the rejection as follows.

Applicants' invention as now set forth in claim 1 is directed to a semiconductor integrated circuit including a decoder circuit which decodes license information stored in a nonvolatile memory unit, and makes each of the internal hardware function blocks separately either usable or unusable depending on the decoded license information in response to information that is kept inside the semiconductor integrated circuit and indicates at least one of a current date and time and a number indicative of how many times one of the function blocks is used.

This allows the use of a function block by taking into account the limited time period or limited number of uses that are authorized under a license agreement, where this information is kept inside the semiconductor integrated circuit, as recited in amended claim 1.

In contrast, Parlour teaches a license manager 107 of a development system 104 that manages license information. Parlour fails to disclose or suggest a mechanism that is provided inside an FPGA to manage license information. In particular, the expiration of the authorized time period is determined by the license manager 107. See column 11, lines 19-29 of Parlour.

Thus, Parlour does not disclose or suggest a semiconductor integrated circuit including at least a decoder that makes each of the internal hardware function blocks separately either usable or unusable depending on the decoded license information in response to information that is kept **inside** the semiconductor integrated circuit (FPGA in the case of Parlour) and **that indicates at least one of a current date and time and a number indicative of how many times one of the function blocks is used**, as recited in amended claim 1.

The Applicants note that Parlour teaches storing keys in an FPGA where the keys are used to decrypt a supplied bitstream containing configuration data, and the decrypted configuration data is then loaded into appropriate memory cells in column 9, lines 38-55. However, these keys are not information that indicates at least one of a current date and time and a number indicative of how many times one of the function blocks is used, as recited in amended claim 1.

To qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102, a prior art reference must disclose each and every feature recited by a rejected claim. As noted above, Parlour does not disclose, teach, or suggest each and every feature recited by claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is not anticipated by Parlour

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 should be deemed allowable over the cited art. As claim 1 is allowable, the Applicants submit that claims

2-10, which depend from allowable claim 1, are therefore also allowable for at least this reason and for the additional subject matter recited therein.

CONCLUSION


For all of the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the claims now pending patentability distinguish the present invention from the cited references. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and an issuance of a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place this application into condition for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned representative at the number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fee for this extension may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 01-2300. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 01-2300 with reference to Attorney Docket No. 100353-00093.

Respectfully submitted,

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